



STATE OF MICHIGAN

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Social workers would join Michigan's licensed professionals

Lansing – The Michigan Senate passed a measure this morning that would require Michigan's social workers to obtain a license from the state, announced Sen. Beverly Hammerstrom, R-Temperance. Senate Bill 189 amends the Public Health Code and changes the regulation of social workers from a *registered* profession to a *licensed* profession.

Under current law, social workers must only be registered or certified, making Michigan the only state that does not have a licensure requirement. This bill defines the scope of practice for social workers and allows them to enforce a code of ethics and standards of practice, bringing them in line with Michigan's many other licensed health care professionals.

"Social workers provide vital services for our most vulnerable citizens, including those with severe disabilities and mental illnesses," said Hammerstrom.

Hammerstrom, who chairs the Senate Health Policy Committee and is a member of the Governor's newly formed Mental Health Commission, sees the licensing requirement as a safety precaution. "Requiring our social workers to be licensed ensures the highest quality of care for Michigan's families," said Hammerstrom. "This is yet another example of our commitment as we strive to improve the delivery of mental health services and overall health care in this state."

Rep. Ruth Johnson, R-Holly, who is a registered social worker and sponsor of the House measure, also recognized the need for the licensing requirement. "By meeting licensing criteria, we are guaranteeing the same standards of care and practices as any other health care professional in Michigan," said Johnson.

The bill now awaits the Governor's signature.

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